



State Representative Mark Ericks

Committees:

- Appropriations
- Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government and Audit Review, *Vice Chair*
- Finance
- Rules

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I want to hold a town hall meeting in our district this fall, but I don't have the specifics yet. Please be sure to check my website at <http://www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/members/ericks/> or call my office (360-786-7900) over the next few weeks to get date, time and location. The 2008 session is coming up and I want to hear your concerns and ideas so I can represent you better in Olympia.

Representative Mark Ericks 2007 Wrap-Up



Oct 2007

Dear Neighbors:

When the gavel came down on the 2007 session of the State Legislature, I felt a tremendous sense of pride over what we had accomplished in the House of Representatives in health care, public safety, education, economic development and the environment.

I was also pleased with the opportunity to act on your concerns in the 1st District.

We worked hard to make major gains on several fronts:

- Health care coverage will be extended to 38,000 more children and we're creating a true children's mental health system in Washington state.
- Increased access to affordable health care will benefit 520,000 adults through the Washington Health Insurance Partnership involving employers, employees and the state.
- Our entire education system—from early learning all the way to college—will get better funding, new programs, smaller classrooms, rewards for outstanding teachers and help for struggling students.
- We took steps to ensure that the 1st District and other areas of the state will share in the economic prosperity that has given Washington record low unemployment rates and in the future will have skilled workers who qualify for family-wage jobs.
- Our commitment to clean air and water is being met with a directive that public agencies aim to use 100% biofuels by 2015, and we're providing more than \$250 million in funding to improve the quality of water in our state.

As a retired police officer and police chief, I helped with the effort to get tough on car thieves. Approval of a bill I co-sponsored increases penalties for adult offenders.

We took care of our obligations in our 2-year operating budget but we also planned for a "rainy day" in the event of an economic downturn.

This fall you'll have an opportunity to vote on this rainy day account that will grow with annual deposits of 1 percent of the state's annual general revenue—more than \$130 million a year—that can only be accessed with a vote by both houses of the Legislature.

The 1st District benefited from the budget process with approval of \$41.2 million in Capital Budget projects and \$175.8 million in transportation projects for 2007-09.

Please read on for details on the Legislature's accomplishments and let me know how you feel about the work of the 2007 session.

Representative **Mark Ericks**
1st Legislative District

Health care accomplishments

Children must be healthy to succeed in school, and families shouldn't have to go bankrupt because they're struck by a major illness. Much of the 2007 Legislative session was devoted to finding health care solutions.

We passed legislation to extend health insurance coverage to 38,000 more children over the next two years by using federal matching funds. The goal is to cover all 73,000 Washington kids currently without insurance by 2010.

And for the 520,000 adults in our state who can't afford health insurance, and the hundreds of small employers increasingly strapped to provide it, some relief came in the form of:

- The three-way Washington Health Insurance Partnership that will allow employers to decide how much they want to contribute to the cost of their employees' coverage, allow employees a choice of plans and let them use pre-tax dollars to pay their share of the premium and provide state help to low-income employees struggling to pay their share of the premium.
- Extended health care coverage for former foster children over the age of 18.
- Approval of recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care to strengthen our public health system and cut red tape by encouraging more electronic record-keeping in medical care.



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Improving public safety

Let's face it, we're all fed up with our epidemic of auto thefts, so I co-sponsored a bill that puts in place mandatory minimum sentences for juveniles convicted of auto theft related crimes and provides that sentences may include home detention, community service and fines.

Penalties for adult offenders have been increased as well. The new law establishes the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority, which is tasked with making recommendations to the Legislature on how we can combat auto theft that occurs every 11 seconds in Washington state.

We also addressed the escalating prison incarceration rate that has gone up 300% in our state since 1980. The offender re-entry program is designed to identify and provide the treatment, education and housing needed by soon-to-be-released nonviolent offenders. The goal is to reduce their chances of returning to prison but for those who repeatedly violate the terms of their community supervision, a new law includes measures to confine them in jail or prison.



1st District Capital Budget projects

Statewide, the 2007-09 Capital Budget includes a record level \$880 million for K-12 construction and \$1.06 billion for higher education. In the 1st District, \$41.2 million from the Capital budget will fund improvements to the UWB/Cascadia CC campus and assist with economic development opportunities through these projects:

- \$32.6 million for the Cascadia College Center for Arts, Technology and Communication; \$354,200 for the Cascadia Minor Works Program and \$98,500 for Cascadia Minor Works Preservation.
- \$150,000 for Phase 3 of the UW Bothell campus.
- \$350,000 toward the purchase of a 600-seat Northshore Performing Arts Center.
- \$ 7 million for land acquisition and design of the Bothell Crossroads/ State Route 522 Realignment.
- \$875,000 for the Friends of Hidden River who are designing the Hidden River Environmental Center in Woodinville.



Improving education across the board

We want future Washington workers to stake a claim in the evolving global marketplace, so we passed legislation to reduce class sizes, and ensure our schools are staffed with outstanding teachers. Here are the highlights on our education investments:

- Funding 9,700 more slots in our universities and colleges.
- Expanding the Opportunity Grants program to help low-income students gain job skills that are in high demand.
- Providing scholarships to high-achieving low- and middle-income students pursuing a degree in math, science or related fields.
- Providing funds to phase in all-day kindergarten.
- Providing \$60 million in additional resources to school districts with high numbers of special education students.
- Allocating an additional \$350 million for teacher salaries, rewarding outstanding teachers with bonuses and recruiting multilingual students to become teachers.
- Giving voters the opportunity to decide if their local school levies should be decided by a simple majority instead of the current 60%. (The election will be this fall.)

We want future Washington workers to stake a claim in the evolving global marketplace ... and ensure our schools are staffed with outstanding teachers.



Rep. Mark Ericks and Speaker Frank Chopp discuss legislation on the House Floor

Big transportation projects in the 1st.

This summer be sure to slow down for construction zones because there will be plenty of them in and around the 1st District. The 2007-09 Transportation Budget invests \$7.5 billion in projects and operations throughout the state and keeps high priority projects on schedule for completion.

I don't have the space to list all of the \$175.8 million in transportation projects benefiting the 1st District, but over the next two years you'll see work in and around the district that will ultimately alleviate traffic. You'll particularly notice the widening of I-405/State Route 520 to SR 522 and the corridor improvement projects on these freeways and highways:

- SR 9 in Snohomish
- I-405, Lynnwood to Tukwila
- SR 522, Seattle to Monroe
- I-5 in the Everett area.



Creating good jobs, supporting employers

We spent a lot of time working on ways to add to the 62,000 new jobs created this past year in Washington and finding ways to support employers who are adding to their payrolls.

- Transportation and Capital budgets for 2007-09 are expected to support a total of 43,000 jobs through 2010.
- More options for worker retraining with a vocational rehabilitation pilot program.
- Partnerships with industry to connect students through skill centers and technical training to career programs.

Some of the ways we are supporting employers include:

- More marketing of tourism and creation of a competitive local grant program to help pay for local tourism promotions.
- Reduction of unemployment insurance rates for start-up businesses.
- Increasing the linked deposit program to give women- and minority-owned businesses more access to capital.



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Mark Ericks
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